

# **2005 White House Conference on Aging Solutions Forum on Nutrition, Wellness & Aging**

**April 6, 2005**

**Martin Luther King, Jr. University Union  
Eastern Illinois University  
Charleston, Illinois**

## **Welcome and Introductions**

Wes Tower, Chairperson, ECIAAA Corporate Board welcomed one hundred attendees to the WHCOA Solutions Forum on Nutrition, Wellness & Aging. He thanked the Planning Committee for their work in preparing the Solutions Forum. He thanked Eastern Illinois University for hosting the Forum. He thanked the students for their participation and assistance. He thanked Dr. Pat McCallister for her hospitality. Pat McCallister, Professor School of Family and Consumer Sciences welcomed the attendees to Eastern Illinois University. She recognized and thanked the students for their participation and assistance. She announced that CPEUs would be awarded to qualifying students attending the Solutions Forum. She introduced the Keynote Speaker James Painter, Ph.D, RD, Chair, School of Family and Consumer Sciences, Eastern Illinois University.

## **Keynote Address**

James Painter presented the keynote address on the theme, "Nutrition, Wellness & Aging." A copy of Dr. Painter's Power Point Presentation is attached to this report.

## **Focus Groups**

The attendees proceeded to their assigned Focus Groups to address the issues of Nutrition, Wellness & Aging from three perspectives:

**Blue Group: Individual and Family Perspective.** Facilitator: Jeanne Snyder, Ph.D., Assistant Professor and Coordinator of the M.A. in Gerontology Program, School of Family and Consumer Sciences, EIU

**Red Group: Community Perspective.** Facilitator: Dee Braden, Executive Director, Coles County Council on Aging

**Green Group: Health Care Perspective.** Facilitator: Mike O'Donnell, Executive Director, East Central Illinois Area Agency on Aging.

## **Process**

The facilitator of each group instructed their group participants to identify problems and vote to select their top five problems using the nominal group process technique. Each group was instructed to identify solutions and vote to select their top three solutions for each problem. The Focus Groups reported their solutions in plenary session. The following is a summary of their reports.

## **Nutrition, Wellness & Aging from the Perspective of the Individual and the Family**

Problem #1: Financial – at all levels: federal, state, and local.

Solutions:

1. Route funds directly to services for which funds are appropriated
2. Sustain, if not, increase funding for services
3. Increase local fund raising activities

Problem #2: Familial Support and Involvement

Solutions:

1. Provide classes and programs to educate family members about the needs of older persons.
2. Adopt a grandparent – possible roles for college students.
3. Provide caregiver education and support services.

Problem #3: Availability and Accessibility of food, transportation, medication, services, choices, etc.

Solutions:

1. Establish and maintain health education and recreation centers with an interdisciplinary approach
2. Increase the availability of preventative services

Problem #4: Lack of intergenerational education on aging, empowerment, nutrition, exercise and advocacy

Solutions:

1. Doctors committed to comprehensive health approaches rather than treating medical ailments
2. Engaging care managers, discharge planners, trainers and educators in promoting intergenerational education.
3. Incorporate nutrition assessments into annual physical exams.

Problem #5: Need for more volunteers for social supports and intergenerational involvement

Solutions:

1. Utilize student interns to fill gaps not covered by funding, e.g., start-up and run programs.
2. School districts and employers should encourage young people to get involved and give assistance.
3. Market need for volunteers to college students.

**Nutrition, Wellness & Aging from the Perspective of the Community**

Problem #1: Transportation

Solutions:

1. Increase funding from all sources
2. Increase advertising
3. Control costs and increase efficiency

Problem #2: Financial Concerns, e.g., medical costs, prescription drugs, affordable housing, food costs, etc.

Solutions:

1. Lower the cost of prescription drugs
2. Increase the supply of affordable assisted living units
3. Create a food distribution program for older adults similar to the WIC Program (Women, Infants, and Children) and expand the income bracket for eligibility.

Problem #3: Accessing Information & Services

Solutions:

1. Free “commercials” for public programs
2. Promote a central access telephone number, e.g., single or coordinated point of entry

Problem #4: Quality of Care

Solutions:

1. Increase pay for workers providing care
2. Increase job-specific training for workers providing care
3. Provide support and counseling to workers providing care, e.g., stress management

Problem #5: Socialization and Older Persons with Special Needs

Solutions:

1. Increased funding.
2. Appropriate training
3. Don't duplicate resources and assets.
4. Intergenerational programming

**Nutrition, Wellness & Aging from the Perspective of Health Care**

Problem #1: Education for Consumers

Solutions:

1. Clear and consistent messages to consumers about nutrition and wellness
2. Individual coaching to help consumers make healthy choices over time
3. Link nutrition educators with providers of primary health care

Problem #2: Preventative Health Care

Solutions:

1. Cover preventative services under Medicare including strength training, exercise, and nutrition education.
2. Engage universities such as Eastern Illinois University and Vincennes University in partnerships with health care providers and senior organizations, e.g., service learning projects.
3. Develop a "Curves-like" exercise program for older adults.
4. Increase opportunities of social engagement for older adults
5. Apply evidence-based nutritional practices in long term care facilities

Problem #3: Lack of Understanding of the Aging Process

Solutions:

1. Promote local participation in "You Can – Steps to Healthier Aging" sponsored by the Administration on Aging (AoA). For information visit AoA's website: [www.aoa.gov](http://www.aoa.gov)
2. Make understanding of the aging process a regular part of all core educational programs
3. Provide more education to older adults and families about nutrition and end-of-life decision making

Problem #4: Training for Professionals and Families Caring for Older Persons

Solutions:

1. Training on nutrition and wellness for family caregiver advisors and family caregivers
2. Increase the availability of physicians trained in geriatrics
3. Consistent messages from physicians to their patients on nutrition and wellness

Problem #5: Affordability

Solutions:

1. Keep the Social Security program strong for all generations
2. Increase coordination efforts among agencies serving older adults to help those who are eligible for a variety of public benefits and private discounts
3. Increase federal funding for the Senior Farmer's Market coupon program.

The ECIAAA distributed evaluation forms to the attendees. The Forum received the highest rating on a scale of 1 to 5 from 80% of the 43 attendees completing the evaluation.

Wes Tower and Pat McCallister thanked everyone for their participation. Special recognition and appreciation was expressed to EIU students who supported the Forum by assisting with the registration process, serving as recorders, time keepers, and guides for visitors.

Mike O'Donnell announced that a summary report of the proceedings would be submitted to the WHCOA Office in thirty days. Copies of the report will be sent to all attendees.

The WHCOA Forum on Nutrition, Wellness & Aging was adjourned at 2:00 p.m.